

Grass-like Plants

River Bulrush

Scirpus fluviatilis - Very common in refuge marshes, this tall (5-6 ft.) bulrush is unique for its triangular stem.



Nut Sedge, Umbrella Sedge

Cyperus, sp. - Several species of nut sedge can be found, growing in both wet and dry habitats. All have comb-like clusters of small, narrow clusters of flowers.

Sedge

Carex, sp. - Nearly 40 species of sedge have been recorded on the Refuge. Sedges are known for their tight clusters of specialized flowering structures called "perigynia", which are generally tear-drop shaped or even like tiny balloons. Most species are knee-to waist-high.



Spikerush

Eleocharis, sp. - Several species occur here. Spikerushes typically have no stem leaves, with a single, cone-like flower cluster at the tip of the stem. Some species are only a few inches tall.



Rush

Juncus, sp. - Typically knee-high or less, rushes have clusters of noticeable single flowers, unlike the rest in this group. Stems are typically smooth and shiny.



Cattail

Typha, sp. - Most of us are familiar with this plant. There are two species that can best be told apart by the arrangement of the male and female flowers: in **Narrow-leaved**, there is a gap on the stem between the brown female and the male pollen flowers at the tip; in **Broad-leaved**, there is little or no gap.



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Boulevard East
Bloomington, MN 55425-1600
952/854 5900

Minnesota Valley's website address:
<http://midwest.fws.gov/minnesotavalley>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD (9453)
<http://www.fws.gov>

Deaf/hard of hearing individuals may reach Minnesota Valley NWR through the Federal Information Relay System at 1 800/877 8339

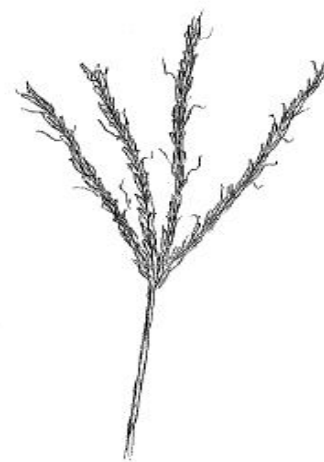
Available in alternative formats upon request.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Grasses & Grass-like Plants



A note about non-native species: Non-native species are those introduced to environments where they previously did not occur. Although some are unobtrusive and rarely spread, many are invasive and become environmental problems. Some, like Common Buckthorn, spread rapidly and take over habitats, competing with the native species and sometimes replacing them. Programs to eradicate these species are being conducted at the Refuge.

Diverse Habitats/ Diverse Species Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge encompasses a large and diverse area of the Minnesota River Valley, featuring tallgrass prairie, marshes and lakes, and riparian habitats. Over 50 species of grass have been recorded within the Refuge, with an equal number of related groups like sedges and rushes. Learning to identify them can be a challenge, and it is hoped this brochure will help to get you started.

Note:
 "Cool Season" grass = species that normally mature in spring or early summer.
 "Warm Season" grass = species that normally mature from mid-summer to fall.



Common Reed (Phragmites)

Phragmites communis - This is a very tall (10 feet or more) species that forms huge colonies in the marshes. It can be seen throughout the Refuge lowlands.



Canada Wild Rye

Elymus, sp. - Cool season grass; prefers total or partial shade. Knee-to-waist high.

Wild Rice

Zizania aquatica - This species is still harvested in many areas of Minnesota and elsewhere. It is typically very tall (over 10 feet), and the flowering head has a female (upper) and male (lower) portion. It grows only in marshes and is thus an important duck food.



Common Grasses of Minnesota Valley

Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii - An important native component of prairies, big bluestem has also been planted extensively in prairie restoration efforts. Its flowering portion has gained the nickname "turkey foot". Warm season species; grows 6 feet or more tall.



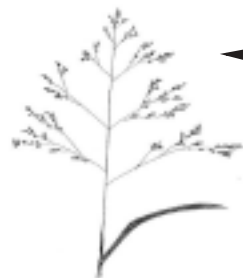
Indiangrass

Sorghastrum nutans - A warm-season prairie species, at peak bloom the flowering portion is a silky-soft, golden brown.



Switchgrass

Panicum virgatum - A warm-season prairie species, this can grow head-high or taller, with a very broad flowering head.



Junegrass

Koeleria micrantha - As its name implies, this is a cool-season grass that reaches its peak bloom in June. It usually forms clumps of knee-high flowering stems.



Sideoats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula - This delicate species, with the flag-like flower-heads, is a prairie species that grows about knee-high..



Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium - This is much unlike Big Bluestem, for it is typically knee-high, with bluish-gray (fresh) or orange-brown (cured) stems. Flowering portions have a wispy, hairy look.



Barnyardgrass

Echinochloa muricata - This knee-to-waist high, warm-season species often grows near water, and is a good source of food for ducks.



Prairie Cordgrass

Spartina pectinata - A lover of low, wet areas, this waist-high to taller grass has very stiff stems and compact flower heads. Warm-season.



Non-native species

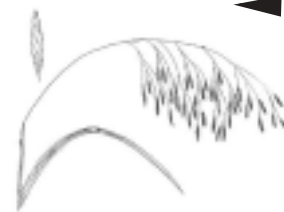
Reed Canary Grass

Phalaris arundinacea - A cool-season species, it covers many acres of the Refuge's lowlands. Its flower heads have a purplish color when fresh. Area farmers use it as a hay crop.



Smooth Brome

Bromus inermis - This cool-season species forms colonies of plants with somewhat drooping flower heads. It prefers, but is not restricted to, uplands. Check the leaf blade for an embossed "M".



Kentucky Bluegrass

Poa pratensis - The familiar grass of many lawns, this cool-season species is often one of the first grasses to bloom. It is typically short (knee-high or less), with a delicate flowering portion.



Yellow Foxtail

Setaria glauca - Widespread and fairly common, this warm-season species is one of several foxtails found here. Its bristly, wooly-bear-like flower head is usually erect, not drooping.

